



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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NOAA Fisheries Announces Actions to Modify Trip Limits for Atlantic Group Spanish Mackerel in the Southern Zone

NOAA Fisheries published a final rule to implement Framework Amendment 2 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Region (Framework Amendment 2) on July 14, 2015 (80 FR 40936). Regulations will be effective August 13, 2015.

Framework Amendment 2 will streamline the commercial trip limit system for the Spanish mackerel Atlantic migratory group by eliminating the unlimited weekday Spanish mackerel trip limit in federal waters off the eastern coast of Florida.

Under this final rule, a commercial trip limit of 3,500 pounds for the Spanish mackerel Southern Zone (South Carolina, Georgia, and eastern Florida) will be established. The trip limits are based on the adjusted quota, which is 250,000 pounds less than the Southern Zone commercial quota. When 75 percent of the adjusted Southern Zone quota (2,417,330 pounds) is met or is projected to be met, the trip limit will be reduced to 1,500 pounds. When 100 percent of the adjusted Southern Zone quota is met or is projected to be met, the trip limit will be reduced to 500 pounds until the end of the fishing year or until the Southern Zone commercial quota is met or is projected to be met, at which time the commercial sector in the Southern Zone would be closed to harvest of Spanish mackerel. Under the final rule, the year-round trip limit of 3,500 pounds, north of the South Carolina/North Carolina boundary would not change.

For more information on Framework Amendment 2, please visit the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office Website at:
http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_sa/cm_p/2014/framework_am2/index.html.

Electronic versions of the amendment and final rule are available at that Web site or from the e-rulemaking portal, www.regulations.gov.